**Sage Lake Association Meeting Minutes**

**May 31, 2025**

**Hill Township Hall**

Board members present: Patti Rogers, President; Betsy Miner-Swartz, Vice President; Ty McGinnis, Treasurer; Kathleen Creager, Trustee.

Board members absent: Sharon Green, Secretary; Brian Hassell, Trustee; Ken Ehlen, Trustee.

Meeting called to order by association president Patti Rogers at 10:00; about 25 people in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance

Secretary's Report – Minutes from August 31, 2024 sent to members by email and posted on the website. To access the minutes on website, login to member’s area, go to portal, log-in, then go to Community & Events, to Event Calendar, go to month of meeting and you will see a button for meeting minutes. Nancy Howald moved to accept the meeting minutes. Seconded by Debbie Holloway. Motion carried

Treasurer's Report – Ty McGinnis reported as of May 2025 there was $10,370.00 in the Fish Fund, $6,653.00 in Neighborhood Watch, $2,025.81 in the Fireworks Fund, $108,416.01 total. 127 members have joined so far this year. In addition to membership fees, over $4000 has been donated to individual funds, mostly the fireworks, fish fund, and neighborhood watch. The scholarship fund is the only one that has expenses exceeding donations; scholarships are supplemented from the general fund. The general fund this year will also be used to supplement the walleye stocking, allowing some fish fund dollars to be used to support the fishing events. Randy Hodge moved to accept the treasurer’s report. Seconded by Holly Hodge. Motion carried.

Reports from Committees –

* + Scholarship program – Since 2018, SLA has awarded 2 scholarships. One to Hale HS and one to Ogemaw Heights High School. The award is $1000 per student. For the 2025 application season, we received 19 applications. This was the highest number of applications we ever received.

Our SLA Scholarship Committee choose one individual from Ogemaw Heights H.S. After reviewing his school application, we discovered he was not going to school. His award was rescinded and a new vote was being taken this week.

From Hale H.S., Leah Sunseri was selected. She will study cosmetology and salon management at Kirtland Community College. Congratulations to Leah. We received a thank you note from Leah. It reads

“Dear all members of the Sage Lake Association, I cannot begin to thank you enough for this scholarship. As a cosmetology major, sometimes my options are limited, and I was very excited yet shocked to receive this scholarship. I appreciate the scholarship being so open, and I hope it continues to be this way. I plan to use this solely towards tuition costs. Again, I cannot express my gratefulness enough. I am honored to be chosen for this opportunity.

- Thanks Again!

 Leah Sunseri, Hale High School "

Thank you to everyone who has donated to our scholarship fund. Huge thanks to the scholarship committee: Carole Gerling, chair, Nancy Howald, Ken Ehlen, Cindy Johnson and Robin Miner-Swartz.

* + Neighborhood Watch (NW) – It brings me great sadness to announce the passing of Dave Awe, who died peacefully on April 4. Dave volunteered his time to the NW road patrol and led the road patrol at the Firecracker 5k. Dave was always willing to help and he will be missed.

In addition, Phil Mikulski, NW Chair, resigned this month. We are sad to have him leave. He did a great job conducting the recent NW meeting and writing the articles for the Fall and Spring Newsletter.

A NW Meeting was conducted at Kenyon’s on May 17. Routes were discussed and changed to fill Dave Awe’s route. Mike Boling volunteered to join the NW team this spring. He will be trained, given signs for his truck and a vest. SLA will be reimbursing each patrol member for gas while using their own cars for patrolling. Tom Boling shared information on scam prevention. The county offers a free service to notify owners if changes are made to their property deed; if you wish to participate, contact the county for the form to fill out. Thank you to the NW team for their great job. Only 1 minor incident was reported this winter and resolved quickly.

* + Boating Safety Class will not be offered this summer. The Ogemaw County Sheriff has not replaced the marine officer yet. An online course is available at Michigan.gov safety certificate.
  + Silent Auction, Fire & Ice Chili Cookoff, Firecracker 5k and Packet Pickup, Gear, Quilt Raffle – Betsy Miner-Swartz

Dinner at Kenyon’s with silent auction was held in September 2024 and netted around $5000 from the silent auction of donated items. The dinner will be held again this year in September.

Fire and Ice Chili Cookoff was very well attended again in February 2025, with around 300 people in spite of a winter storm. In addition to being a great fun day, this event helps support Kenyon’s at a time of year that is otherwise very slow.

Firecracker 5K signup is ongoing. This is the 12th year for the 5K. Last year set a record with 550 participants, bringing in around $15,000 for the association. This year for the first time, there is a race committee (instead of Betsy and Robin Miner-Swartz doing all the organizing). The committee was formed after Betsy and Robin realized the to-do list to get ready for race day had over 100 items on it. Race packet pick-up will be at the Rogers’s barn on Second Ave. the evening of Friday, July 4, with the race taking place the morning of Saturday, July 5.

Gear sales have started for this year, with the new coffee mugs and flat brim hats already available, and the new apparel items arriving soon. The new coffee mugs have nearly sold out, and more are on order but in a different color, since the originals were no longer available. Some items from previous years are also still available. Watch the Friends of Sage Lake Facebook group for announcements of gear sales days/times. Gear will also be available during 5k packet pickup and at the 5K.

Again this year, Amy Jalics has created and donated a beautiful quilt to be raffled off at the last association meeting of the year on August 30. Raffle tickets are available during gear sales.

* + Fishing tournaments, Clinics and Stocking - Chris H

The ice fishing tournament, originally scheduled for February, was postponed for two weeks due to ice conditions. Despite the schedule change we had good attendance, with over 40 participants.

Next weekend (June 6-8) is the rough fish tournament, targeting bowfin/dogfish, bullhead/catfish, and carp. This tournament helps reduce the pressure on the game fish population. Fish caught during the tournament are donated to ARK wildlife rehabilitation in St. Helen to be fed to the wildlife, or to a community garden organization on Jose Lake who use the larger fish for fertilizer.

The fishing raffle packages will be available again this year, with tickets sales starting at Kenyon’s next weekend.

Two fishing clinics, funded by grants, will be held again this year. Youth fishing clinic for ages 5 – 10 will be held at Kenyon’s on Saturday, June 21, and the teen clinic for ages 10 – 16 will be held at Kenyon’s on Sunday, June 29. Watch the Facebook page and your email for more information.

SLA fishing tournament is scheduled for June 28, and the pike derby near the end of July.

DNR fish population survey, conducted using a “boom shock” to bring fish to the surface so they can be caught, catalogued, and released, was conducted and a full report will be available soon. Preliminary results showed 16% of the fish caught were walleye, including at one that was less than one year old (too young to have been from our stocking program, so some breeding is occurring in the lake) and at least one that was too old to have been from our recent stocking. Walleye and bass in Sage Lake are growing faster than the state average. Northern pike are growing 1.2" below the state average, but that's an improvement from 3.5" below the state average in 2019. The DNR biologist stated that our concern about low numbers of pan fish is something she has been hearing state-wide.

Please submit information about your catches to the SLA fishing survey, available at sagelakefishsurvey.org or through the QR code on the free tackle box stickers available at gear sales and raffle ticket sales. This survey helps the fishing committee and the DNR biologist to have more information about what is going on with fishing on Sage Lake.

Walleye will be stocked again in fall of 2025.

* + Boat Parade–This year’s boat parade theme is Made in Michigan and the parade will be held Saturday July 5 starting at Kenyon’s at 7 p.m. Cash awards and trophies will be awarded.
  + Sage Lake Fireworks Display: July 5 at 10:15. We will use the same company, Wolverine who will offer a similar show as last year. Cost is $15,000.
  + Loon Report – Nancy Howald -- The first two loon nests spotted earlier in the year are no longer occupied and no babies have been seen. There is a third nest that is still occupied.
  + Mary Ellen’s Fun Day will be on July 12. With the unfortunate news that Crusins won’t be open for business this season, community partners Joe and MJ Vicari are excited to host this event at Kenyon’s. There will be face painting, bike giveaways, loads of games for the kids and a 50/50 drawing. Volunteers are needed. Contact Sharon Green if you can help. Sharon Green, Chair, Laurie Powless and Kim Davis do a great job organizing this event.
  + Lake Management - Chris H on Brian Hassell’s behalf. Our Lake is looking very good this year, with slower aquatic plant growth, mostly from the winter weather effect. The weather as well as other environmental actions has a direct effect on our lake each year, sometimes positive and sometimes negative.

Our first Sage Lake invasive plant and algae survey was on May 13th and our first aquatic plant treatment was applied on May 21st. The treatment was for Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM), and Filamentous Algae and applied in all of our eight lake channels. All areas treated were posted the day before the treatments. All of the products used for treatments are approved by the State of Michigan and the Federal Government and there have been no adverse effects on people, fish, wildlife, or domestic pets in the application of these products.

Some lakefront owners have shared concern about foam washing up on shorelines. The foam is a natural occurring event caused by nutrients and high winds on the lake. This is not PFAS (a chemical used in applying a foam fire retardant while fighting fires) and not caused by any of the aquatic plant lake treatments. The next aquatic plant treatment will be applied in the third week of June after the next lake survey in the second week of June, weather permitting.

Please be aware that the algae blooms in our lake and other lakes in Michigan are caused by excess nutrients, especially phosphorus and nitrogen which comes from agricultural runoff, wastewater, stormwater, and fertilizers used on our lakefront lawns. The chemical reactions combined with warmer weather creates more algae and sometimes algae blooms. Our lake management company PLM has been able to control the algae and other aquatic plant growth to continue to have a healthy and safe lake. Please be safe on the water and enjoy our beautiful lake.

* + 2024 SLA Survey – Conducted in Fall 2024. 279 people responded to the community survey. We received valuable feedback and a Strategic planning meeting is planned for September 2025.

New Business:

Other

50/50 raffle – the 50/50 payout was $87 and was won by Butch Leix.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Creager